REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 12 and 17 are presently active in this case, Claims 1, 12 and 17 having been amended and Claims 7 and 22 canceled by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Official Action, the title was objected to as being insufficiently descriptive; Claims 1, 2, 7, 17 and 22 were objected to as including informalities; and Claims 1, 7, 12, 17 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by, or in the alternative under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over either Sasaki et al. (6,205,099, herein "Sasaki") or Ko et al. (U.S. Pat No. 6,804,797, herein "Ko").

In response to the objection to the title, the title has been amended to be consistent with the claimed invention. Accordingly, the objection to the title is believed to have been overcome.

In response to the objection to Claims 2, 7 and 22, Applicants note that Claim 2 was cancelled in the response filed March 12, 2007 and Claims 7 and 22 have been cancelled herewith. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the objection to these claims is moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to Claims 2, 7 and 22, be withdrawn.

In response to the objection to Claims 1 and 17, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1 and 17 have been amended to recite additional structure with regard to the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to these claims be withdrawn.

The information storage medium recited in Claim 1 comprises defect management area sets that are used in due order. One defect management area set includes first, second, third, and fourth defect management areas, and each of the first, second, third, and fourth

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defect management areas stores defect management information. Thus, a single defect management area set is an area dedicatedly used for collectively replacing the first, second, third, and fourth defect management areas of another defect management area set. With this configuration, even if a defect management area is replaced with another defect management area, the defect management information in said another defect management area can be easily searched (managed).

Namely, upon detection of a defect in a current defect management area set included in the defect management area sets, the current defect management area set is replaced with the next defect management area set. More specifically, the first, second, third, and fourth defect management areas included in the current defect management area set are replaced with the first, second, third, and fourth defect management areas included in the next defect management area set, respectively.

The information storage medium recited in Claim 1 also comprises a spare area. The spare area is used, for example, for replacing the defective block included in the blocks forming the data area, but is not used for replacing the defect management area. In this way, the defect management information area is not replaced with the spare area, but is replaced with the dedicated defect management area set. Accordingly, replacement of the defect management area is completed in a read-in area and read-out area.

Thus, the configuration of the information storage medium recited in Claim 1 is able to solve, at least, the following two problems. For instance, a problem exists that, when defect management information is concentrated in one area the information storage disk becomes vulnerable to obstacles such as scratches and dust. In addition, the opposite problem exists in that when the defect management information is overly dispersed, specifically, access efficiency is reduced.

Thus, in the information storage medium recited in Claim 1, the defect management information is dispersively stored in the read-in area and the read-out area. For example, in the read-in area are found the first and second defect management areas which are included in a single defect management area. In the read-out area are found the third and fourth defect management areas which are included in said single defect management area. As a result, the claimed configuration is tolerant of obstacles. Further, the first and second defect management areas, which are included in the single defect management area set in the read-in area, are located adjacent to each other. Further the third and fourth defect management areas, which are included in said defect management area set in the read-out area, are also located adjacent to each other, thereby preventing the access efficiency from being reduced.

In the information reproduction method recited in Claim 12, the latest defect management information is read from the information storage medium having the above-described configuration, i.e., the information storage medium in which the defect management information stored in another defect management area can be easily searched.

In the information recording method recited in Claim 17, in the information storage medium having the above-described configuration, the current defect management area set is replaced with the next defect management area set upon the detection of a defect in the current defect management area set.

Addressing now the rejection of Claims 1, 12 and 17 under §102(e) or §103(b) under Sasaki and/or Ko, that rejection is respectfully traversed.

Sasaki describes a disk which includes a spare area. However, Sasaki does not describe or suggest defect management area sets used in due order and dedicatedly used for replacing a defect management area. In addition, even if the defect management area was to be replaced with the spare area disclosed in Sasaki, such a configuration could not position defect management information in such a manner as to achieve the high tolerance to trouble

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high access efficiency found in the claimed invention as the spare area of <u>Sasaki</u> does not provide the functionality of the defect management area recited in the present claims.
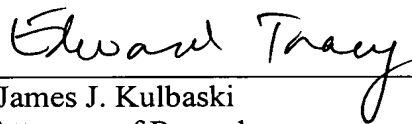
<u>Ko</u> describes a disk which includes spare areas in the defect management area. However, such spare areas do not allow the whole defect management area to be replaced. In contrast, in the claimed invention, the whole defect management area can be replaced. In addition, all of the first, second, third, and fourth defect management areas can be collectively replaced. With this configuration, the defect management information stored in another defect management area can be easily searched (managed). This feature is not found in <u>Ko</u>.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1, 12 and 17, as amended, patentably distinguish over <u>Sasaki</u> or <u>Ko</u> considered individually or in any combination.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above comments, no further issues are believed to be outstanding, and the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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